

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel Claims 32-35 and 40-44, amend Claim 36, and add new Claims 45-51 as follows. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application is presented below. Changes in the currently amended claim(s) are shown by strikethrough (for deleted matter) and underlining for added matter.

1.-9. Cancelled

10. (Previously amended) A process for producing a dimensionally stable pack made of cardboard, in particular a hinge-lid box for cigarettes, comprising the following sequential steps:

- (a) providing a folding and sealing apparatus for folding and sealing the pack;
- (b) providing the pack with an outer wrapper having folding tabs, the outer wrapper made of sealable film;
- (c) folding the tabs of the outer wrapper into a region of tab overlap in a folding station of the folding and sealing apparatus;
- (d) temporarily maintaining the tabs in the region of tab overlap by tacking or by tack connection;
- (e) transporting the pack to a permanent sealing station; and
- (f) fixedly maintaining the tabs in the permanent sealing station of the folding and sealing apparatus, the tabs being permanently sealed in the region of tab overlap by full-surface sealing.

11. (Previously amended) The process according to Claim 10, wherein the step of temporarily maintaining the tabs in the region of tab overlap is by small surface-area spot sealing.

12. (Previously amended) The process according to Claim 10, wherein the step of temporarily maintaining the tabs in the region of tab overlap is by small surface-area linear sealing.

13. (Previously amended) The process according to Claim 10 further comprising the sequential step (g) of heat treating the outer wrapper to generate shrinkage of the outer wrapper.

14. (Previously added) The process according to Claim 10, the outer wrapper having folding side tabs and at least one set of additional folding tabs selected from the group consisting of folding end wall tabs and folding base wall tabs, wherein step (a) of providing the pack with an outer wrapper is by folding a blank of film, the blank forming the outer wrapper, around the pack in a tubular shape, and wherein the tabs of steps (b-d) are the side tabs, the process further comprising the following sequential steps:

(e) folding the at least one set of additional folding tabs into a region of tab overlap; and

(f) temporarily maintaining the at least one set of additional folding tabs in the region of tab overlap by tacking or by tack connection.

15.-28. Cancelled

29. (Previously added) The process according to Claim 10, wherein the step of temporarily maintaining the tabs in the region of tab overlap occurs in the folding station.

30. (Previously added) The process according to Claim 10, wherein the step of temporarily maintaining the tabs in the region of tab overlap occurs distant the folding station.

31. (Previously added) The process according to Claim 10, wherein the step of providing the pack with an outer wrapper is by folding a blank of film, the blank forming the outer wrapper around the pack in a tubular shape.

32.-35. Cancelled

36. (Currently amended) ~~The process according to Claim 32,~~ A process for folding and sealing an outer wrapper on a dimensionally stable pack comprising the following steps:

providing a blank for forming the outer wrapper, the outer wrapper having side tabs and a second set of tabs;

folding the outer wrapper around the pack in a tubular shape such that the side tabs overlap one another in a region of side tab overlap;

temporarily maintaining the side tabs, the side tabs being temporarily maintained in the region of side tab overlap;

folding the second set of tabs of the outer wrapper in a region of second tab overlap;

temporarily maintaining the second set of tabs, the second set of tabs being temporarily maintained in the region of second tab overlap;

transporting the packs with the temporarily maintained tabs to a side tab permanent sealing assembly; and

fixedly maintaining the side tabs in the side tab permanent sealing assembly;

wherein the step of transporting the packs with the temporarily maintained tabs to a side tab permanent sealing assembly comprises moving the packs upward to a pack tower, and

wherein the step of fixedly maintaining the side tabs in the side tab permanent sealing assembly is by full-surface sealing in the pack tower.

37. (Previously added) The process according to Claim 36, further comprising the steps of:

transporting the packs with the fixedly maintained side tabs to a second tab permanent sealing assembly; and

fixedly maintaining the second set of tabs in the second tab permanent sealing assembly.

38. (Previously added) The process according to Claim 37, wherein the step of transporting the packs with the fixedly maintained side tabs to a second tab permanent sealing assembly comprises moving the packs laterally to a sealing path, and

wherein the step of fixedly maintaining the second set of tabs in the second tab permanent sealing assembly is by full-surface sealing in the region of the sealing path.

39. (Previously added) The process according to Claim 38, further comprising the step of conveying the pack with fixedly maintained side and second tabs to a shrinking station, wherein the pack is subjected to a shrinking process for the outer wrapper by means of surface heat transfer.

40.-44. Cancelled

45. (New) Process for producing a pack made of thin cardboard, in particular a hinge-lid box for cigarettes, with an outer wrapper made of thermally sealable and shrinkable material having folding tabs, including side tabs, and transverse folding tabs and longitudinal folding tabs assigned to an end wall or a base wall of the pack, the outer wrapper enclosing the pack and the folding tabs thereof being connected to one another in the region of overlaps by thermal sealing, comprising the steps of:

(a) providing a blank for forming the outer wrapper and folding said blank around the pack in a tubular shape such that the side tabs of the outer wrapper overlap one another,

(b) then connecting the side tabs to one another in the region of the overlap by tacking and/or by a narrow continuous or interrupted sealing strip,

(c) thereafter folding the transverse and longitudinal folding tabs assigned to an end wall or a base wall such that the transverse folding tabs and the longitudinal folding tabs partially overlap each other,

(d) then connecting the transverse and longitudinal folding tabs to one another in the region of their overlap by thermal tacking,

(e) next moving the packs upward into a pack tower, where the side tabs are permanently sealed in the region of their overlap by full-surface sealing,

(f) thereafter transporting the pack laterally to a sealing path where the transverse and longitudinal folding tabs are surface sealed, and

(g) the packs with the finished and sealed outer wrapper are then conveyed through a shrinking station, in the region of which the large-surface front walls and rear walls of said packs are subjected to a shrinking process for the outer wrapper by means of surface heat transfer.

46. (New) The process of Claim 45, wherein the tacking of step (b) involves spot seals.

47. (New) The process of Claim 45, wherein the tacking step does not initiate shrink wrapping.

48. (New) A process for folding and sealing an outer wrapper on a dimensionally stable pack comprising the following steps:

providing a shrink wrapping film for forming the outer wrapper;

wrapping the shrink wrapping film around the pack to form side tabs, bottom tabs, and top tabs;

causing the side tabs to overlap one another;

thermally pre-sealing the side tabs;

causing the bottom tabs to overlap one another and the top tabs to overlap one another;

thermally pre-sealing the overlapping bottom and side tabs;

permanently sealing the side tabs; and

permanently sealing the bottom and top tabs.

49. (New) The method of claim 48, wherein the pre-sealing steps and the permanent sealing steps do not initiate shrink wrapping of the film.

50. (New) The method of claim 48, furthering comprising the step of shrinking the film, after the side tabs and the bottom and top tabs are permanently sealed, by heating.

51. (New) The method of claim 48, wherein pre-sealing any of the overlapping tabs covers less than half of the area of overlap of the tabs.
